

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office
1244 Storrs Road**

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

MINUTES

Members: Steve Bacon, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Ruth Moynihan, Betsy Paterson, and Pene Williams

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm and Kathleen Paterson

Guests: Gloria Bent and Jessica Higham (both with Mansfield Advocates for Children) and Lon Hultgren, Town Director of Public Works

1. Call to Order

Frank McNabb called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm in Chair Steve Bacon's absence.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

Betsy Paterson moved to approve the Minutes from January 19, 2010; Ruth Moynihan seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved.

Ms. Paterson moved to approve the Minutes from February 16, 2010; Jon Hand seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved.

4. Discussion of Public Spaces in Storrs Center – Mansfield Advocates for Children

Gloria Bent and Jessica Higham introduced themselves to the Committee as representatives of the Mansfield Advocates for Children (MAC). Ms. Bent reviewed some of MAC's work and noted that the organization had recently received a \$50,000 Graustein grant, for which the Partnership had submitted a letter of support.

Ms. Paterson commented on the success of Mansfield's program for young children and commended MAC for their work.

Cynthia van Zelm recapped the discussion from the previous meeting regarding the possibility of a public play space in Storrs Center.

Ms. Bent explained that two areas of concern for MAC are walkability and bikability (as part of their focus on health) and programming (as part of their focus on community connectedness). Ms. Bent noted that she would like to see safe places for residents, including children, to bike and to store their bikes safely. She mentioned that MAC hosts several programs during the annual Week of the Young Child in April and suggested that some of those programs could take place in the downtown.

Ms. Higham discussed the vision of a playground within the downtown as a way to increase the feeling of community connectedness among residents. She added that, should the space be available, MAC would be willing to coordinate the fundraising for playground equipment.

Ms. Paterson suggested that Ms. Higham look up an organization called Kaboom. She explained that the National League of Cities works with them by volunteering to install playgrounds in the host city of its national conference. **Ms. Paterson said she would contact the National League of Cities to see if they could provide more information.**

Ms. Moynihan suggested that exercise stations be added to trails in the back part of the project.

Ms. Paterson reiterated the need for public restrooms nearby a play area.

Mr. Hand agreed and added that family restrooms would be preferable.

Ms. Higham added that, separate from the playground, she would like to have a family resource center within the downtown. She explained that the resource center would be a common area for residents to learn about resources for families and would include space for programming and play groups.

Lon Hultgren noted the possibility of including such a space in the intermodal center.

Mr. McNabb asked if it would be possible for LeylandAlliance to identify three possible playground locations with pros and cons for the Committee to consider.

Ms. van Zelm asked Ms. Higham to email her MAC's detailed list so that she can pass it on to the developer.

(Mr. Bacon arrived.)

Mr. Hultgren suggested that, when planning the playground, the Committee and MAC should consider ways to tie the space in to other municipal facilities, especially the ones in the immediate area.

Manny Haidous wondered if the Greek Church had space available for use as a play area.

Ms. Higham asked if Public Works could help with preparing a site for a playground area vis a vis her estimates for a fundraising goal.

Mr. Hultgren said it would be more feasible for Public Works to help if the site was relatively flat.

Ms. Moynihan commented that there should be several public restrooms around the downtown.

(Ms. Bent and Ms. Higham left the meeting.)

5. Update on Storrs Road design and Intermodal Facility

Mr. Hultgren said that the Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for the state grant for the parking garage and the Federal grant for the intermodal facility had been released to a positive response. He explained the need for the two separate RFQs and the process to follow in the selection of a designer.

Mr. Haidous asked about the time table.

Mr. Hultgren estimated that a designer for each project could be named as early as June. He commented that one benefit to having to do both grants separately is that, while interviewing the interested designers, staff will have an opportunity to hear from different perspectives and learn from each firm.

Ms. Moynihan asked if there would be space for a Zipcar-type program.

Mr. Hultgren said that there would be space both for a car-sharing program and for electric-charge cars. He added that the intermodal center would include facilities for a variety of transportation needs, including bicycle storage and repair, restrooms, and a waiting area for bus users. He explained that the garage will be too small for a bus to enter, but there will be a bus stop on "Village Street" and a waiting area in the intermodal facility.

Ms. Williams asked for details about staffing the facility and the associated costs.

Mr. Hultgren answered that those items are still under discussion and will be determined in part by the development agreement between the Town and the developer.

Ms. van Zelm added that the Parking Steering Committee is also examining those issues in addition to general parking concerns.

Mr. Hultgren then reviewed the Storrs Road design process with BL Companies and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT). He said the goal is to have the design finalized and a bid ready by next winter with construction beginning in the spring.

6. Update on Storrs Center

Ms. van Zelm said that BL Companies hoped to begin its investigation of the former Publications building next week. She explained that the investigation is necessary to determine how best to proceed with demolition. Ms. van Zelm invited the Committee to attend the Partnership's public update on Storrs Center. The update will be Wednesday, April 28 at 7:00 pm in Town Council Chambers. Members of the development team, including representatives from LeylandAlliance, UConn, and the Town, will provide a review of the past year's accomplishments and a look ahead to Storrs Center.

7. Topics for Next Meeting

Steve Bacon asked if there was a topic set for the next meeting.

Mr. Hultgren said that the Four Corners Sewer and Water Advisory Committee had expressed interest in meeting with the Planning and Design Committee to ask about their past work.

Ms. van Zelm noted that the next meeting will be Tuesday, June 15, 2010.

8. Adjourn

The Committee adjourned at 5:55 pm.